DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
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FA or FOI EXEMPTIONS b6

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EXCISE

NEA/

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June 26, 1981

UNCLASSIFIED

Dear Senator Glenn:

I am responding to your letter of May 29 which forwarded the concerns of your constituent [redacted] regarding the report that American officials advised Israel to shoot down Saudi AWACS. b6

To the best of our knowledge, no responsible American official has ever suggested that Israel should shoot down Saudi Arabia's AWACS aircraft with American crewmen aboard, should Israel perceive the Saudi AWACS as operating too close to Israeli territory. It appears that two, quite distinct comments may have been erroneously combined to produce such a misleading impression. Some commentators have suggested that if American crewmen were aboard Saudi AWACS, it would be less likely that there would be operations along the Israeli border. It has also been noted that the AWACS aircraft's limited speed would make it susceptible to be attacked and possibly shot down by Israeli fighter aircraft.

Any effort to combine these two arguments, leading to the false conclusion that the U.S. was suggesting that American crewmen abroad Saudi AWACS be sacrificed is a gross distortion of the facts.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Fairbanks
Assistant Secretary
for Congressional Relations

Attachment:

Correspondence returned.

The Honorable
John Glenn,
United States Senate.

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Drafted: NEA/ARP: MRaietti
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Clearances: NEA/ARP:RHPelletreau
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